

John Overton to Andrew Jackson, June 2, 1831, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JOHN OVERTON TO JACKSON.

[Washington ?], June 2, 1831.

I recollect when writing the pamphlet defence of the Executive and his commanding General, in relation to the Seminole War, in 1818, that upon requesting from you, minute information, on every point connected with the campaign, that you furnished me with your orders etc, and placed before me your confidential letter to Mr Monroe, being a copy of the one transmitted, to him, as you stated, with Mr John Rheas letter in his own hand writing, which, in substance conveyed the idea, that he had conversed with the President, who shewed him your confidential letter; that he approved of your suggestions etc¹

¹ This letter comes nearest to corroborating Jackson's contention about the Rhea letter of all the evidence that was offered; but as evidence it is weak. Overton does not say that it clearly and pointedly said that Monroe authorized what Jackson suggested; but says that it "in substance conveyed the idea". Why should Overton, a skillful lawyer and a devoted friend of Jackson, use this indefinite language if he had a clear recollection of the matter? It seems that Overton was in Washington when this letter was written, preceding Jackson to the Rip Raps by a fortnight.

I further told you afterwards, that in my opinion that you had done wrong in destroying Mr Rheas letter, which you told me you had done, at his request. And, when at the Hermitage, and before entering on the Campaign, you showed me what I considered a *carte Blanche* of an order, dated I think in Dec. 1817, from the secretary of War, respecting the mode

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of conducting that War, I cautioned you to be on your guard, for that cabinets here, as in the courts of Europe, might sometimes design to use it as a means of putting down the reputation of an officer